

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 001419

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/12/2015

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [CE](#) [LTTE](#)

SUBJECT: SRI LANKA: STATE OF EMERGENCY DECLARED FOLLOWING
FOREIGN MINISTER'S ASSASSINATION, BUT SITUATION CALM SO FAR

REF: A. COLOMBO 1417

[B](#). COLOMBO 1418

Classified By: Charge' d'Affaires James F. Entwistle. Reason: 1.4 (b, d).

[1](#). (U) President Chandrika Kumaratunga declared a state of emergency the morning of August 13 following the killing of Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar by suspected Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) assassins the previous night (Ref A). The measure, which gives police and military expanded powers of search, seizure and detention, must be approved by Parliament within the next two weeks. An announcement by Sri Lanka Army (SLA) Spokesman Brigadier General Daya Ratnayake urging local residents to remain home and suspend unnecessary travel was broadcast across local media the morning of August 13. (Note: The Brigadier's urging notwithstanding, we noticed no appreciable reduction in vehicular or pedestrian traffic as of 10:00 a.m. local time August 13.) According to media sources, police retrieved a gun and ammunition from bushes in the neighborhood where the killing took place.

[2](#). (C) Charge' spoke with Norwegian Ambassador Hans Brattskar mid-morning August 13. Brattskar said that Norwegian peace envoy Erik Solheim had contacted LTTE Peace Secretariat head Pulidevan by telephone in Kilinochchi

SIPDIS

several hours earlier. In that conversation, Pulidevan had denied that the LTTE had assassinated Kadirgamar, commenting that it would make no sense to do so since, in the Tigers' view, Kadirgamar was "sidelined from peace and ethnic issues." Brattskar said Solheim had told Pulidevan that his denial was difficult to swallow and that the LTTE should expect widespread condemnation.

[3](#). (C) SLA sources told the DATT that the military had observed no unusual LTTE activity in the north or east that would indicate that the Tigers were planning to resume full-scale hostility. However, the SLA has increased its security posture and will continue to monitor the situation. A contact in Batticaloa has told us that the military has sealed off the road 5 km north of Valachchenai to prevent travel into LTTE areas. RSO has also heard unconfirmed reports from Tamil sources that the assassin(s) had already fled to LTTE-held territory in Batticaloa. We have heard no reports of other disturbances--including protests or demonstrations--since the killing. (The morning of August 12, however, an announcer for the Tamil service of the state-run television and radio news stations and her husband, a member of the anti-LTTE People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam, were shot and killed in their Colombo home.) The Embassy Emergency Action Committee met the morning of August 13 to review our current security posture (Ref B).

[4](#). (U) The Government has announced that Kadirgamar will be accorded a state funeral. A committee headed by Deputy Minister of Defense Ratnasiri Wickremanayake was meeting at 10:30 a.m. local time to plan the service. Foreign Ministry Protocol Chief told Charge' the funeral probably would be "Monday or Wednesday," but that details would be announced later.

[5](#). (C) Comment: Despite this shocking event and the declaration of a state of emergency, the streets of Colombo appear no different from any other Saturday morning, and traffic appears to be flowing more or less as usual. From reports we have heard to date, things seem equally calm--if tense--in other areas as well, including the north and east. Having carried off its highest-profile hit since the killing of President Ranasinghe Premadasa in 1993, the LTTE appears to be waiting to see the Government's response. We will continue to urge restraint and prudence and to monitor the situation .
ENTWISTLE